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ER 8-9730

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Honorable Allen J. Ellender Sr.
United States Senate
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Senator Ellender:

I want to thank you for giving so generously of your time the other morning when you came to our headquarters and described your recent trip to a number of representatives of the intelligence community.

I sincerely regret that I was unable to attend the debriefing, but I have received a full report on it, which I found extremely interesting. I was particularly impressed by your observations on the consequences of the mass education program within the Soviet Union, and I agree thoroughly with your conclusion that this is presenting the Soviet leaders with a difficult and growing problem.

Thank you also for offering to lend us your pictures, which I am sure will be of considerable interest. We will see to it that they are given the most careful treatment.

In the event that you contemplate future trips abroad, particularly in the more remote areas of the world, I hope you will give us advance notice and allow us to brief you, in whatever detail you wish, on the countries concerned, and to suggest certain particular objects of personal observation which could be of great interest to us. The reports of a keen observer, such as yourself, are of great value.

IG/LC:NSPau (16 Jan 57)

Distribution:

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Sincerely,

Allen W. Dulles
Director

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ER 8-9751

16 January 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD:

SUBJECT: Debriefing of Senator Ellender - 10 January 1957

1. Senator Ellender came here for a debriefing on the world tour he made during the recess between the 84th and 85th Congress. General Cabell was present to greet the Senator, and stayed for part of the debriefing. There were 11 other CIA representatives present, 5 from the Department of the Army, 4 from the Department of the Air Force, and 3 from the Department of State.

2. Senator Ellender had been requested to devote the major part of his time to his impressions of his trip to Russia. He had been there the previous year, and had been invited back by Mikoyan "to visit any part of the country he wanted." On this trip, the Senator covered several thousand miles within the Soviet Union. He took roughly 10,000 feet of motion picture film, which he has agreed to lend us.

3. The Senator was in Russia primarily in his role as Chairman of the Agriculture Committee, and he concentrated on the agricultural sector. He had a 2 hour and 38 minute interview with Khrushchev, during which time the agricultural problems of the country were discussed. The Senator made some summary observations on Soviet agriculture. Russia has no food reserves, except for small amounts of grain. There is very little livestock, and what there is is of poor quality. Farming methods are by and large ancient, although he did observe some modern equipment in the larger collective and state farms. Production of fruit is bad, and virtually nothing is produced for canning. The Russians do produce some eight million bales of cotton in the southern part of the country which is of exceedingly good quality. He was very impressed by this development. He visited the 70 million acres of "new lands" which Khrushchev had been bragging about. Although the results of the first year or two are impressive, the Senator is convinced, and I gather informed Mr. Khrushchev, that soil and climatic conditions, and improper methods of cultivation, would turn the entire area into a dust bowl within a few years' time.

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4. The Senator was very much impressed by an electrical equipment factory he visited in Kharkov. They were turning out turbines larger than anything he had seen in this country, presumably for hydroelectric establishments. He saw a turntable with a radius of 60 feet, shafts 4 feet in diameter, and cranes which could raise 150 tons of steel at a time.

5. The Senator was also impressed by a huge dam project some 21 kilometers north of Stalingrad on the Volga river. The dam he visited is supposed to be bigger than Grand Coulee Dam. Apart from the dam itself, he was very much taken by the modern cities which are apparently built up in connection with all such projects prior to the beginning of construction work. According to his description, these cities provided relatively comfortable living standards for the people. They all had extensive facilities for sports and cultural events. All the women worked, and they had a system of nurseries for the children. Industrial plants are being built so that after the work on the dam is completed, the workers can be employed without having to move. The Senator attached some significance to the fact that work had been started on this dam in 1950, and was stopped abruptly in 1952. It started again after the Geneva Conference in 1955. He did not receive what he regarded as a satisfactory explanation for the stoppage and the resumption.

6. The following is a summary of the Senator's major views on the Russian situation.

A. The people of Russia are becoming restive, and the country's leaders are going to have to respond more and more to public demands. The students are dissatisfied. Everyone is eager to learn about America, but there is a sincere dislike for the kind of propaganda handed out by most U. S. sources, which always takes the line that everything communist is by definition bad. The average Russian, after all, is living a little better now than he was under the Czars, and we would be well advised to recognize that the Russian people do not necessarily feel that communism itself is a bad thing for their country.

B. One of the main reasons why the Soviet leaders are particular about the places foreigners visit is the almost total lack of modern conveniences outside of a few major cities. He didn't run into one decent hotel between Moscow and Kharkov (had to sleep in his car). A few kilometers outside of the major cities the roads

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turn from asphalt to mud, and are almost impassible. Embarrassment at these conditions is a major deterrent to opening up Russia to foreign visitors.

C. The system of collective and state farms is not working, and the government will have to permit the people, possibly in groups, to buy their own equipment.

D. The Russians do not have the facilities for production of aircraft which we have been lead to believe. He is convinced that all of their modern aircraft are hand tooled. One of the reasons they are objecting to mutual inspection in the military field is that we might find out how little they really have.

E. We should resume and build up the exchange of persons program with Russia. The program never should have been cut off in the first place.

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Norman S. Paul
Legislative Counsel

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MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director

Recommend signature of attached
letter to Senator Ellender.

Also attached is a report of debriefing.
Paras. 6 & 8 probably worth noting.

Nor [redacted]
Legislative Counsel

17 Jan. 57
(DATE)

STATT

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101
1 AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED.

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